



Editor- Bruce Fortin



December 2025

The Odd Fellows Quarterly

Thank You, Fellow Oddfellow!

Welcome to the latest edition of the FLT Kentucky Oddfellows Newsletter.

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Our Rebekah's

At the 2024/2025 Rebekah Assembly of Kentucky presentation, Past President Casey Puckett proudly presented a check to Lynda Taylor, representative of Gateway Children's Services, for funds raised through last year's President's Project. The donation, totaling \$500, was awarded in Mount Sterling, Kentucky, and will support Gateway Children's Services in continuing their vital work providing care and resources for children and families in need.



The Southeastern Association of Odd Fellows and Rebekah's,

Representing lodges in Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee, is addressing the impact of Sovereign Grand Lodge decisions, supporting struggling lodges, and providing guidance on lodge formation to mention a few. To support these initiatives, each lodge is asked to contribute \$2 per member. Please send payments to either Grand Marshal Craig Stainfeld at 2126 KY 10, Tollesboro, KY 41189, or Parliamentarian John Redmond at PO Box 33, Tollesboro, KY 41189. Please make checks payable to them and note Southeastern Association.

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Common Sayings

Break The Ice

Meaning: Do or say something to relieve tension or get conversation going in a strained situation or when strangers meet.

Origin: In the old days, commercial ships would often get stuck in frozen rivers during wintertime, so smaller ships called "icebreakers" would come to clear a path to shore by breaking the ice. In the 17th century, people began to use the phrase to mean "to reduce tension in a social situation."

More Than You Can Shake a Stick At

Meaning: a large amount or quantity of something.

Origin: This idiom was born when farmers, who waved sticks to herd sheep, would have more sheep than they could control.

Minding Your Ps and Qs

Meaning: Be careful to behave well and avoid giving offence.

Origin: This expression has quite a few theories as to its origin, but our favorite refers to the practice of chalking up a 'tab' of drinks for later payment. P refers to pints, and the Q is quarts. You would do well to correctly tally up the right amount as not to cause offense, especially a customer with a few beers under their belt! Again, there is little to support this theory other than the correct lettering, but we like it nonetheless.



Celebrating 280 Years of Fellowship at Ringgold Lodge

At this year's Ringgold Lodge IOOF Christmas dinner, held December 13th at Caproni's on the River in Maysville, Kentucky, we had the joy of honoring four of our brothers for reaching an extraordinary milestone—60 years of membership in our Order.



Grand Master Randy Harrison was on hand to present commemorative pins, sharing smiles and handshakes with three of the honorees: Jerry Rains, Fred Toncray, and Lloyd Caskey. Each brother stood proudly as their decades of dedication to Odd Fellowship were recognized before family and friends gathered for the holiday celebration.

Although unable to attend, Brother Jimmy Joe Toncray—Fred's brother—was also named among the distinguished recipients. His absence was felt, but his service and commitment were warmly acknowledged by all present.

In addition to these remarkable milestones, Brother Russ Wallingford was recognized with his 40-year membership pin. His four decades of commitment remind us that every year of service strengthens the bonds of fellowship and enriches the life of our Lodge.

The evening was filled with fellowship, laughter, and gratitude, reminding us that the bonds we share through Odd Fellowship grow stronger with each passing year. Honoring these men was not only a celebration of their personal journeys, but also a testament to the enduring spirit of Ringgold Lodge.



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As we honor our brothers' milestones, we also remember those before us and mourn the passing of another 50-year member.

In mourning



John Foster DeSpain



John Foster DeSpain over 50 years as a member of the Oddfellows has departed us.

"The trick to life is to make it look easy." That was a favorite saying of John DeSpain. His quick wit and ready smile made him friends wherever life took him. Although life has its challenges for each of us, John lived his life making it look easy.

John passed away December 6, 2025. He was born on January 25, 1947, in Lebanon, Kentucky to the late Mae and F. E. DeSpain. John is survived by his loving wife of 53 years, Ann Steffen DeSpain and his son John Ashley DeSpain. He was predeceased by his daughter, Katherine (Katie) Ann DeSpain. John is survived by his sister, Susan DeSpain Cornett, brother-in-law William Fred Cornett, niece Leah Jayne Bendele and nephew Benjamin David Cornett.



John graduated from Maysville High School, was president of the Junior-Senior Class, and he was a graduate of Eastern Kentucky University with a double major in History and Political Science. While at Eastern, he worked at WEKY as a radio personality.

In 1972, he married the love of his life, Ann Steffen DeSpain. Johnny loved to shop for Annie and surprised her with fancy outfits to wear dancing which was one of their favorite things to do. He was always proud to share pictures of her with family and friends. Of course, he wanted to show what a "master of fashion" he was by the stunning way she looked in the outfits he chose for her.

His career took him in various directions including teaching at Maysville Junior High School, being a probation officer, a pre-trial officer for the state of Kentucky, a court bailiff for Mason Co. Court System and owner of a Video Library. During his career, he had a DJ business that took him all over the state. He was known as JD the DJ.

Johnny served as past president of the Maysville Country Club, was president of the Jaycees, the longest standing member of the DeKalb Lodge, and a Kentucky Colonel.

Services for John DeSpain were at Brell & Son Funeral Home on Tuesday, December 9, 2025.

Johnny found great joy in entertaining others with his jokes. He loved to make people laugh! Friends love to call their house or cell phone just to listen to the entertaining voice messages Johnny artfully created for each season or holiday. He always had a way with words.

Some of Johnny's favorite words, "There will always be tough times. Tough times don't last. Tough people do."

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Aeolian Lodge #51

After leasing a room for \$1 per year from the Chamber of Commerce for 20 years, IOOF Aeolian Lodge #51 was asked to vacate due to the Chamber's expansion plans. This becoming rather financially beneficial; the lodge has since purchased and relocated to 923 Glen Lily Rd, Bowling Green, KY 42101. The new facility, formerly an electrical company, features modern lighting, marble flooring, a 3,200 sq. ft. space with a 40x40 office area, and a 1,600 sq. ft. garage. The garage will be renovated to better serve as a lodge area, providing ample space for future growth and parking. We look forward to this new chapter and the opportunities it brings for our lodge and its members.

Merry Christmas from Aeolian to you.



From lending a hand with the Red Kettle campaign to gathering in true fraternal spirit for Christmas—filled with hearty laughter, joyful music, and the bonds of brotherhood—the season shines brighter at Aeolian Lodge. Fellowship, charity, and love are not just words here; they are living traditions that make every day more meaningful.



Brother John Renfrow, a member of Aeolian Lodge #51, delivered ten bicycles to Dishman McGuinis School. These bicycles are typically awarded to outstanding or deserving students throughout the school year. Brother Renfrow is recognized for his community involvement and positive presence.

Aaron Lodge #412 – Honoring Tradition with Faith, Love, and Truth

At Aaron Lodge #412, our members are more than companions in fellowship—they are family, bound together by compassion and the timeless virtues of Faith, Love, and Truth. We walk in the traditions handed down to us: visiting the sick with kindness, burying the dead with dignity, and educating the orphan with care. These acts are not mere duties, but sacred reminders of our calling to serve both one another and the community.

At our most recent gathering, Brother Luke McLaughlin exemplified this spirit of generosity by donating toward a wreath in remembrance of those who came before us. Inspired by his gift, the Lodge as a whole joined together, contributing five wreaths for Wreaths Across America. On December 13, 2025, these wreaths were laid with reverence, a symbol of our enduring commitment to honor the memory of the departed and to keep alive the traditions that define us.

In every act—whether comforting the sick, laying a wreath upon a grave, or guiding the orphan toward hope—we reaffirm that Aaron Lodge #412 is not simply a gathering of people, but a family devoted to service, remembrance, and the eternal values that light our path.



Oddfellows and Rebekah's of Mount Sterling holiday dinner Mount Sterling Rebekah's 82

The Odd Fellows full of holiday spirit as members gathered for their annual Christmas celebration. With rustic charm, festive décor, and a glowing tree at center stage, the evening was a joyful blend of tradition, laughter, and unexpected delight. A stranger walked through the door wearing a sweater so loud it nearly outshone the tree. Featuring a 3D Santa popping out of a chimney, the outfit drew curious glances.

Members arrived in full seasonal flair—some sporting classic Christmas sweaters, others embracing the outrageous. The bar was lively, the chalkboard menu offered holiday brews, and the mandala tapestry added a touch of mystery to the merriment.

Then came the grand moment: Santa Claus himself arrived, ringing his bell and spreading cheer. Members young and old gathered for photos..



In Friendship, Love, and Truth, we wish all our members and friends a Merry Christmas and a joyful New Year.

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Nolo's on the Levee in Mount Sterling on Dec 8.

The Keeper's Duty

In the quiet hills of Kentucky, a fraternal organization carried a solemn responsibility: the stewardship of its cemetery. This was no ordinary plot of land—it was consecrated ground, a resting place for departed brothers and sisters whose lives had been bound together by oaths of fellowship, service, and honor.

Owning and maintaining a cemetery was never easy. Funds are scarce, and the heavy machinery needed for digging graves or moving earth is far beyond the reach of the lodge's modest treasury. Yet the members understood that their duty was not measured in dollars, but in devotion.

Every burial was treated as a ceremony of remembrance. When a brother passed, the lodge gathered not only to mourn but to reaffirm their bond. Without equipment, they relied on contractors, volunteers, and sometimes even their own hands. The work was hard, but it was sacred. Each spade of soil was lifted with reverence, each stone placed with care.

The cemetery became more than a resting place—it was a living testament to the fraternity's endurance. Families visiting the graves saw not just markers of the past, but evidence of a community that refused to let hardship diminish its respect for the departed.

The cemetery stood as a symbol: that brotherhood does not end at death, and that honor is carried forward by those who remain

George Brady news.

Jonesville Cemetery #9 on 11/07/2025- Received revised deed from Attorney Cobb, this date. In 2022, we had a survey done on the land given to the cemetery but was never recorded. That deed was never filed at the courthouse. The deed was filed on 14 Nov. Grant County D46, page 347. Currently, we are scheduled to close on the cemetery on Friday, November 21st. The property has been sold to Danny and Connie Hon. They will register with the AG office as the Cemetery owners. As we have said, Owning and maintaining a cemetery was never easy. Funds are scarce, and the heavy machinery needed for digging graves or moving earth is far beyond the reach of the lodge's modest treasury. Danny and Connie will carry on our traditions.



MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND A
HAPPY NEW YEAR



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DEKALB LODGE CHRISTMAS PARTY 2025



Current Officers of Dekalb Lodge present at the Christmas Party/Dinner/Celebration, left to right: Tim Douglas, Ron Rice, John Redmond, Harry Applegate, Jerry Muse, Randy Harrison, Kirby Bennett, Stockton Wood, and Joseph Hazlett.



PGM Gary Bowers and his wife JoAnne. Gary has the distinction of having the longest membership of Ringgold/Dekalb Lodge - 64 years.



PAST GRAND MASTERS FROM DEKALB AND RINGGOLD LODGE PRESENT AT THE 2025 DEKALB CHRISTMAS DINNER/PARTY/CELEBRATION
Left to right: Tim Griefenkamp, John Fern, Jerry Hafer, George Brady, Charles Thomas, Mike Stitt, Eddie Johnson, Craig Stanfield, Jerry Muse, Gary Bowers, and Randy Harrison.

